



askHRgreen.org 2012 RESEARCH KEY FINDINGS

Background

In 2010, the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission began a five-year contract with the firm Cahoon & Cross, Inc. (C&C) to develop an environmental education and outreach campaign to assist localities in meeting their regulatory requirements in the most economically efficient and effective manner. As a part of the campaign, EAB Research, a third party firm, conducted the first in a series of three online surveys to gauge the region's environmental literacy, identify target audiences for specific behaviors and establish a baseline for evaluating campaign progress.

The askHRgreen.org campaign, guided by the findings from the fall 2010 research, was launched in early 2011, and the Website went live that summer. In fall 2012, EAB Research conducted the second online survey for askHRgreen.org. A total of 400 residents across the sixteen cities and counties of Hampton Roads and equally weighted for the Southside and Peninsula participated in the study. There was a sampling error for the study of +/- 5%.

General Findings

The research revealed that the askHRgreen.org campaign has proven effective in educating and modifying the behavior of the audience. In addition, those who are aware of askHRgreen.org are more likely to seek information, have more knowledge and report positive behaviors. However, the findings revealed a disconnect between behaviors and the personal impact of those actions. This represents an opportunity for future askHRgreen.org messaging.

Overall self-perceived knowledge of local environmental issues has increased. The largest increases are among

- single females, under \$75,000 income
- those aware of askHRgreen.org

Recycling & Beautification

- Regular recycling increased by four points to 85% between 2010 and 2012
- Recycling drivers
 - Protecting the environment
 - Reducing trash in landfills
 - Sustainability/preservation of resources
- Recycling barriers
 - Uncertainty of which items are recyclable
 - No residential pickup
 - Bin fills up too quickly

Stormwater Education

- No significant change in fertilizer use and soil testing
 - 65.9% have never had their soil tested
 - 96% fertilize one time to four times per year
 - 65% know over-fertilizing leads to excess nitrogen and phosphorous in waterways. Far fewer know the result to be harmful algae blooms.
- Path of the Storm Drain
 - 50.3% know storm drains direct untreated water to local waterways

Fats, Oils & Grease Education

- Pour Fats, Oils & Grease Down the Drain
 - 10.3% - decreased 12% from 2010
- Flush Materials Other than Toilet Paper
 - 90.4% - first year question asked
- Garbage Disposal Use
 - 61.5% - no significant change from 2010—however, frequency of use declined
 - Use of garbage disposals is not considered harmful

Water Awareness

- Regularly Drink Tap Water
 - 81.8% drink tap water - slightly up from 77.4% in 2010
- Compared to Other Household Utility Bills, Think Tap Water is a Good Value
 - 83.8% consider it a good value - no change from 2010
 - Significant changes among those aware of askHRgreen.org
 - 50% decrease in those not drinking tap water
 - 13.7 % increase in those who think tap water is a good value
- Of Those Who Do Not Regularly Drink Tap Water:
 - 68.4% cite taste as the main reason for not drinking tap water
 - 44.7% cite health and safety concerns

Summary

Are Hampton Roads residents more knowledgeable of local environmental issues than they were two years ago? Are they learning where to turn for environmental information? The answers are yes and yes. The 2012 study revealed we are successfully changing behaviors and that the askHRgreen.org campaign is helping localities effectively and efficiently meet their state regulatory requirements for improving the health of local waterways, recycling rates, water conservation and sanitary sewer overflow prevention.

While there were improvements in certain environmental areas, the findings also revealed a “disconnect” between some behaviors and the personal impact of those actions, especially with regard to the effects of over fertilizing lawns and leaving pet waste on the ground.

Over the next year, the askHRgreen.org team will use the survey results to make adjustments to the overall campaign. We'll be focusing more on showing the connection between negative environmental behaviors and the resulting consequences, in addition to driving more people to the website. The survey showed that the more people are aware of askHRgreen.org, the more likely they are to adopt positive behaviors, and that's what this campaign is all about.